

# Steal This Hook!

## Scofflaw Heroics

By Doug Beyer



This edition of Steal This Hook has the theme *scofflaw heroics*: hooks in which the PCs must bend or break the law to do the right thing. They may run afoul of all manner of law enforcement, from the Sharn City Watch to a Q'barra blackscale warrior-squad, but they'll know in their hearts that justice was served. Some lawful characters may find these hooks unsettlingly unprincipled, while others see them as compatible with their own personal moral law. In any case, weave these into your campaign to remind your players that, in Eberron, heroes can't always follow the straight and narrow definition of what's right. Or use them as ways to get the heroes into trouble -- they could be framed for the very acts they were hired to commit!

### Medicine Hunters

The King's Forest (*ECS*, pg. 150) is the only known lair of the secretive woodling jaguar (see *MMIII* for the woodling template or substitute some other rare jungle creature). A wizard needs the liver of the creature to create a potion to save his son from a debilitating disease. Hunting in the King's Forest, however, is strictly illegal -- especially for rare species! Can the heroes evade the Knight Rangers long enough to hunt down one of the creatures to save the boy? The Jungle Boys are territorial outlaws, but they know the King's Forest well -- will they help or hinder the heroes' mission? Might the wizard actually be a cultist of the Dragon Below who needs the liver for a more nefarious purpose?

### Escaping the Hangman's Noose

An elven blacksmith charged with murder will be hanged at sundown tomorrow, but his daughter knows he's innocent. There's no time to prove his innocence before the appointment with the gallows: the heroes must rescue him from death first, and then, while on the run from the law, help seek the evidence that will clear him. Did the man's prosecutors simply miss clues that lead to the real killer, or is the man being deliberately framed? Perhaps the real killer is a relative with a grudge who has used their relationship to frame him. Perhaps the man was in the process of forging a weapon that could expose and slay a vampire secretly preying on the town, and the vampire's minions have influenced the town's process of law to condemn the man before the weapon can be finished.

### Spies at the Keep

The PCs don't have the sanction of law on their side when they trespass around Arythawn Keep on the border of Thrane, and they can't claim a legal right to gather surveillance on activities there. That's just the sort of thing they'll need to do as spies hired by representatives of the government of Zilargo. The gnomes of Zilargo suspect the government of Thrane is using Arythawn Keep as a testing ground for unwholesome experiments on corpses collected from the Mournlands. The heroes are furnished with disguises and fake identification papers, but they'll be on their own if discovered. The cleric of the Silver Flame who commands the Keep is trying to advance Thrane's interests by resurrecting key Cyran soldiers and generals from the Mournlands, and he won't be merciful with foreign spies intruding on his plans.

## Jewel-Hunting under Arcanix

Diamonds and other precious jewels encrust the underside of the floating towers of Arcanix -- everybody knows this. The ivory-tower mages of Arcanix prohibit anyone from removing them; they believe that the gems help hold the floating islands aloft. The rakish Lord Kenth ir'Kenth, a noble of Aundair, is sick of seeing those wasted jewels glittering down at him when they float over his lands. He hires the PCs to do reconnaissance work for him. Lord Kenth needs information about how well the jewels are guarded -- but hey, if the characters can bring back some of the actual jewels, too, all the better. In fact, Kenth wants 80 percent of any removed gems. In exchange he offers legal protection should they be caught and the use of some magebred spider eater mounts capable of carrying the heroes up to a floating tower.

## Undercover in Droaam

Droaam may be a strife-ridden, savage frontier, but it's still a sovereign nation under the Treaty of Thronehold. Why, then, are the PCs infiltrating the power structure of the dangerous Daughters of Sora Kell (*ECS*, pg. 166)? Why are they posing as criminal warlords, currying favor with the Daughters' generals and minions, and seeking an audience with the Daughters themselves? Are they mad? Were they hired by the Gatekeepers to find information about the political landscape of Droaam? Are they on a mission from the Brelish crown to assassinate Sora Katra? Are they actually working for one of the sisters in a plot against the other two? Might a foreign enforcer squad mistake them for actual criminals and blow the heroes' cover in Droaam? The PCs will need their wits about them in Droaam's shifting political structure to accomplish their goals.

## Mini-Hooks

- A mage's cache of material components was stolen by a notorious rogue. The PCs are hired to steal them back by whatever means necessary before the components can be used to summon a storm elemental (*MMIII*) from Kythri.
- The heroes are sent to kidnap a young prince -- for his own good. Unbeknownst to the prince's guardians, assassins in the palace will kill the prince during the next full moon.
- A slightly shady security agency headed by a rogue member of House Kundarak is looking for daring adventurers to test the defenses of military fortresses around Breland.
- The only way to stop the Lord of Blades is for the PCs to restart an illegal creation forge and churn out a defense force of warforged chargers.
- The PCs are hired to start a riot during an important election in Karnath.
- The heroes must give false testimony at the trial of one of their friends, but the courtroom is about to be enchanted with a *zone of truth*.
- A greedy lord taxes his vassals to pay for the expensive gifts he buries with his ancestors. The PCs help the serfs by robbing the lord's mausoleum to return their hard-earned funds.
- One of the adventurers unexpectedly sees her own face on a "wanted" poster outside a tavern.

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## About the Author

Doug Beyer spent a lot of time getting philosophy degrees until he figured out that he should just move to Seattle and become a web developer for Wizards of the Coast. Now he spends his days working on games and his evenings playing them. Doug uses the time normally allotted for sleeping to lurk on the Wizards.com message

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